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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 002163

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DEPT FOR AF/E

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/14/2019

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SUBJECT: SOMALIA - SOMALILAND UCID CHAIRMAN ATTEMPTING TO
RESOLVE IMPASSE AS PRESIDENT RIYALE STALLS

Classified By: Somalia Unit Counselor Bob Patterson for reasons 1.4(b,d
) .

¶1. (C) Summary: Somaliland UCID Party Chairman Warabe on October 14 updated Somaila Unit Poloff on the Somaliand political situation. (Note: In advance of the conversation, Somaliland President Riyale, in a likely attempt to delay naming his own nominees, rejected two opposition party nominations for the National Electoral Commission (NEC) on technical grounds. Riyale complained that the UCID nominee had served on the previous NEC and that the Kulmiye nominee was a party board member. End note.) Warabe said he was trying to convince Kulmiye Chairman Silanyo, in the interest of continued forward movement on the election process, to accept President Riyale's rejection of Kulmiye's candidate to the NEC. However, Warabe admitted his efforts had so far been unsuccessful. Warabe said UCID would support the Kulmiye candidate if the nomination ultimately went forward to the parliament. (Note: Riyale managed to convince Warabe to withdraw his nominee. However, Silanyo in an October 13 telecon (septel) told us that Riyale does not have the right nor the grounds to reject Kulmiye's nominee. Our contacts tell us that Silanyo, in an October 14 letter to Riyale, indicated his intention to retain the Kulmiye candidate. End note.) We are encouraging all parties to quickly resolve the NEC issue so that they may move forward on the election process. End summary.

¶2. (C) UCID chairman Faisal Ali Warabe, who is currently in Nairobi, on October 14 told us that, if Somaliland President Riyale had not actively sought to slow down the process, it would have been possible for all parties to announce their NEC nominees two days after the party heads met on October 2. Warabe said he tried to convince Riyale that all parties should discuss potential nominees together in order to avoid an unnecessary slowdown but that Riyale had refused. Warabe said he attempted to meet with Riyale, in advance of putting forward the UCID nominee, because he heard the President intended to reject the UCID nominee. Warabe expressed frustration that Riyale had waited until Warabe officially put forward a nominee and then sent a letter of rejection.

¶3. (C) Warabe said Riyale was also operating in a less than straightforward manner with Silanyo and Somaliland's clan-based upper house of parliament (the Guurti). According to Warabe, Riyale met with Silanyo for many hours on October 12 and told Silanyo that he would accept the Kulmiye candidate. However, Riyale reportedly asked Silanyo that he should not announce his agreement to the media. Warabe said Riyale on October 13 sent Silanyo a letter indicating his rejection of the Kulmiye nominee. (Note: Silanyo told us that Riyale on October 12 had appeared convinced by many of Silanyo's arguments, to include Silanyo's argument that his

nominee resigned from Kulmiye's Executive Board long ago, but that Riyale's inner circle later influenced the President. End note.)

¶4. (C) Warabe said that Riyale rejected one of the Guurti's nominees based on dubious accusations that the nominee had once been charged with a crime. Faisal said the nominee, a Somaliand newspaper editor, was in the past detained by the Somaliland authorities for disagreeing with the government but that Riyale had not produced proof the nominee was ever charged. (Note: The Guurti chairman appears to have outmaneuvered Riyale in clan terms. (Riyale's Gadabursi subclan is historically represented by Guurti representatives to the NEC. The chairman, however, reportedly wants to name a Warsengeli and an Arab Issaq to the NEC instead of a Gadabursi.) This leaves Riyale with the difficult choice of nominating a Gadabursi who is not a strong ally of the President or opening himself up to political criticism that he is nominating his family, if he appoints a supporter from his own subclan. End note.) Warabe said he does not think Riyale will name his nominees by October 15, as Riyale previously indicated, despite the President's claim to have a short list of potential nominees.

¶5. (C) Warabe said the President does not have the authority to reject the NEC nominees. Such authority, he said, lies with a subcommittee of the parliament. Warabe said he is, nevertheless, encouraging Silanyo to accept Riyale's rejection of Kulmiye's nominee in the interest of forward momentum of the election process. (Note: Warabe said he withdrew his nominee in order to prevent needless delays. End note.) Warabe admitted his efforts so far had been unsuccessful and said Silanyo on October 14 resubmitted the same nominee to

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Riyale via official letter. Warabe said Silanyo's deputy told him that if Riyale again rejects Kulmiye's candidate they will attempt to pressure Silanyo. Warabe said UCID would support the Kulmiye candidate if the nomination ultimately went forward to the parliament, however. (Note: The opposition hold a majority in the parliament and would most likely be able, as long as solidarity remained between Kulmiye and UCID, to approve Kulmiye's candidate. End note.)

¶6. (C) Comment: We are encouraging all parties to quickly resolve the NEC issue so that they may move forward on the election process. We think it is important to move beyond the NEC issue and to encourage Silanyo to remain flexible. However, we also think Riyale is likely to attempt to manipulate the process at every stage. Allowing him to do so during this first step of the process could send a dangerous signal.

RANNEBERGER